

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Blanton Museum of Art Receives National Endowment for the Humanities Grant

\$99,999 Award to Fund *Painted Cloth: Fashion and Ritual in Colonial Latin America*



Austin, TX — May 13, 2021— The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin has received a \$99,999 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the Public Humanities Projects category, which supports projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences. This grant has been awarded to support the implementation of *Painted Cloth: Fashion and Ritual in Colonial Latin America*. The exhibition and accompanying publication examine the social roles of textiles and their visual representations in different media produced in Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela during the 1600s and 1700s.

“We are incredibly honored to receive this grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities,” said Blanton director Simone Wicha. “This prestigious award will enable us to expand our commitment to exhibiting art from the Spanish Americas and strengthen our investment in international scholarship in this still underserved field of Latin American art. A culmination of many years of collaborative research among scholars in Mexico, Peru, and the U.S., *Painted Cloth* is the first major exhibition organized by the Blanton dedicated to art of the Spanish Americas, in addition to being the first produced under the Thoma Foundation’s curatorial endowment. Focusing on colonial dress, it opens a window into this rich period of artistic production and gives us insight into the lived experiences and aspirations of the era. We are thrilled to be able to bring these magnificent works—and the stories they tell—to life for our community through the support of the NEH.”

Set to open in Fall 2022, *Painted Cloth* addresses the relationships between secular and liturgical garments and the art of 17th- and 18th-century Latin America. Beyond emphasizing how aesthetic traditions of European and Indigenous origin were woven together during this period, the exhibition will showcase the production, use, and meaning of garments as well as the ways they were experienced both in civil and religious settings. The exhibition will be accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, educational resources, and public programs.

“*Painted Cloth* reflects on the essential role of wardrobe in articulating socioeconomic identity in civil and religious settings in a multiracial environment,” said Rosario I. Granados, the Blanton’s Marilynn Thoma Associate Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas, who is organizing the exhibition. “For instance, in one of the largest sections of the exhibition, portraits of wealthy Indigenous *criollos* from Lima and Mexico City as well as New Spanish *casta* and Peruvian *mestizaje* paintings explore how fashion codes determined social interactions and collective identities in terms of gender, race, and class. Visual literacy is at the core of *Painted Cloth*. This generous NEH grant supports the Blanton’s vision of bringing attention to artistic production of the Spanish Americas through this exhibition, alongside innovative educational resources and robust public programming.”

Last month the NEH announced \$24 million in grants for 225 humanities projects nationwide to support the preservation of historic collections, humanities exhibitions and documentaries, scholarly research, and curriculum projects. The Blanton is among 16 grant recipients in Texas and one of only two in the city of Austin. This is the first exhibition grant that the Blanton has received from the NEH.

Painted Cloth: Fashion and Ritual in Colonial Latin America is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.

Generous funding for this exhibition and accompanying catalogue is provided by the Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation, and is also made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

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Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov.

About the Blanton Museum of Art

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with around 19,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

Image Caption:

Unknown artist, *Nuestra Señora de Belén con un donante* [Our Lady of Bethlehem with a Donor], Cuzco, Peru, 18th century, oil on canvas, 105 1/4 x 73 x 2 1/2 in., Collection of Carl & Marilyn Thoma